



National Park Service
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Big Bend National Park News Release

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK REINSTATES TEMPORARY CLOSURES FOR PEREGRINE FALCONS

In August 1999, the Peregrine falcon was removed from the federal endangered species list, a move prompted by the falcon's comeback from the brink of extinction. There remains however, cause for concern. The Peregrine is still classified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a *Species of Special Concern*. Throughout Texas there are less than one dozen known nesting pairs and the falcon remains on the state's endangered species list.

The federal Endangered Species Act requires that Peregrine populations continue to be monitored for a minimum of five years after the date of delisting. National Park Service policies require the protection and preservation of all state-listed species and all species of concern, regardless of federal or state classification. In keeping with this mandate, and to provide the nesting falcons with areas free of human disturbance, Big Bend National Park will again temporarily close or place restrictions on the use of certain park lands.

The areas closed to public entry from February 1 through May 31 are:

- The Southeast Rim Trail and a portion of the Northeast Rim Trail from the Boot Canyon/Southeast Rim junction to a point just north of Campsite NE-4.
- All Southeast Rim campsites as well as Northeast (NE) campsites 4 and 5 are closed during this period.

Technical rock climbing on rock faces within ¼ mile of known peregrine eyries, as posted, will not be allowed between February 1 and July 15.

The park does not plan to close any other areas but restrictions may be modified if Peregrine behavior or nesting sites do not follow traditional trends.

Through the efforts of federal, state and private agencies, the Peregrine has staged a remarkable comeback since it was placed on the federal list in 1970. Superintendent John H. King remarked, "In spite of the success of the falcons over their entire range, there is still concern for certain small populations, including the falcons that nest in Big Bend National Park and along the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River."

"The success of the Peregrine falcon recovery has been encouraging to all of us who have followed their plight, but they aren't out of danger yet - the Big Bend population still needs attention and protection. We will take all necessary steps to ensure their continued existence," said Superintendent King.

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